

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AND VISIONS OF MARY

February 17, 2004 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The Roman Catholic church has many strange and unbiblical doctrines about Mary. According to Catholic theology, Mary was sinless, though she herself called Jesus her Savior, meaning that she was indeed a sinner in need of salvation just as every other person who has been born into this world other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Supposedly, Mary is a perpetual virgin, meaning she had bore no other children after Jesus. Thus she is often called Ever Virgin in Catholic circles, even though the Scripture says that Mary had other children. Further, the Catholic Church teaches that Mary participated in Jesus' sufferings on the cross through her motherly compassion and somehow actually had an active role in redemption. Thus she is called in the Vatican II documents "Co-mediatrix," meaning co-redeemer, and "Reparatrix," meaning one who amends or atones. This is utter blasphemy, since Jesus Christ alone paid the full price of redemption through His death and shed blood. The Catholic church also calls Mary the Mother of God even though the Bible never calls her by such a title, as the eternal God had no beginning, no birth. Only in regard to His humanity did Jesus have a mother. Mary is not the mother of God for there is no mother of God! Another Catholic dogma is that Mary ascended bodily to heaven and was enthroned as Queen of Heaven. Finally, the Catholic Church believes the exalted Mary now hears and answers prayers and also makes intercession with Jesus on behalf of those who pray to her.

All of these doctrines are heretical, yet they were reaffirmed by the Vatican II Council that met in the mid 1960s and produced official pronouncements of church teaching. These heresies are held by the present pope, John Paul II, who has worshipped at Mary shrines such as Fatima and Lourdes on his many travels. When he survived an assassination attempt, Pope John Paul II gave glory to Mary. He has the words "All Yours" in Latin embroidered on his papal garments, signifying his devotion to Mary.

Many Roman Catholics have claimed to have seen and heard messages from Mary, and these alleged visitations have increased the superstitious and unscriptural practices which surround Mary in Catholic piety. I refer to such things as praying the Rosary, wearing pieces of cloth called scapulars, the "sacred heart of Mary," and venerating Mary images called "Madonnas." Sites of alleged Mary visitations are considered holy and have become the focus of pilgrimages. The two most popular Mary shrines are Lourdes in France and Fatima in Portugal.

Since 1981 a new place of pilgrimage has increased in popularity. This is Medjugorje, which is located in a remote part of western Yugoslavia not far from the Adriatic Sea.

BOOKS FOR SALE ON MEDJUGORJE AT CHARISMATIC CONFERENCE

The North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization in New Orleans, July 1987, was an ecumenical charismatic conference which I attended with press credentials. Some 40 denominations were represented. There were many books for sale about Medjugorje; and as far as I could ascertain, all were positive about the alleged Mary visitations. The leaders of this ecumenical

charismatic conference, Pentecostal Vinson Synan and Roman Catholic David Sklorenko, affirmed to the press that the books and other items for sale had been approved by the conference workers.

I was amazed by the multitude of titles for sale at the congress in New Orleans on such subjects as Fatima, Lourdes, Medjugorje, Mary, the pope, and other traditional Catholic heresies. There were also rosaries, crucifixes, scapulars, and medallions for sale.

After looking through the books on Medjugorje, I purchased one which seemed representative of the rest. The editor of *IS THE VIRGIN MARY APPEARING AT MEDJUGORJE* is Catholic priest Rene Laurentin, who was an advisor for the Vatican II Council. It is from this book, published in 1984 by The Word Among Us Press, that we draw the following documentation.

VISIONS OF MARY IN MEDJUGORJE, YUGOSLAVIA

Since June, 1981, six Roman Catholic children have been seeing visions of a person who claims to be Mary the mother of Jesus Christ. Though the bishop of the area has taken a position of uncertainty toward the visions, multitudes have made pilgrimage to Medjugorje and have faith in the messages which are being giving forth by the young people. Laurentin estimates that more than two million have made the pilgrimage (*Is the Virgin Mary Appearing at Medjugorje*, pp. 1, 2). Today most of the young people who had the alleged visions are in their thirties, and their testimony has been widely accepted by Roman Catholics and non-Catholics, particularly charismatics. On some days there are thousands of pilgrims in the area, as many as 50,000 on some special "holy days" of the Catholic church. The visions have also had an impact on the entire general area of that part of Yugoslavia, causing the people to be more serious about their Catholic religion. For example, there is an annual procession to the concrete cross at the top of Mt. Krizevac in Medjugorje. The number of those participating in this procession has increased since 1981. In 1982 there were 70,000 in the procession; in 1983 one hundred thousand were present (*Ibid.*, p. 166).

WHAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE SEE

"The young people state that they see Our Lady, 'not a picture,' but with three dimensions. 'She is very beautiful' they say as best they can. They have difficulty finding suitable words to describe her... 'She has black hair, a bit curly, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, she is slender... beautiful... light. I want to look at her, to look only at her... how beautiful she is. She is covered with a veil which flows over a robe which is impossible to describe... You could say it was gray, and yet it isn't quite gray.... It is a luminous transparency akin to blue. Her voice is agreeable to listen to. You could say it was music'" (*Ibid.*, pages 31, 32).

WHERE AND HOW DO THEY SEE THESE VISIONS?

At first the young people saw the visions on a hill, but there was trouble with the communist authorities and they decided to begin waiting for the visions inside the local Catholic church. The visions usually come at approximately 6:15 p.m.

"The room of the apparitions is small, about 14 by 15 feet. When they come into the room, the youngsters turn toward the Cross, which is on the northern wall. Then they put on a table just

below the Cross objects which people have given to them -- rosaries, pictures, etc. -- so that Our Lady can bless them. They line up, facing the Cross, standing, and begin to recite seven times the Our Father. Hail Mary, and Glory Be to the Father, along with the Creed... Usually after the second or third Our Father, Our Lady appears to them in a great light which precedes her. At that moment the youngsters fall to their knees all at the same time in an impressive unison. Their gazes all converge in the same direction. Immobile and without any communication with the exterior world, they begin their dialogue with the Virgin. Those who are near them neither see nor hear anything. They are able only to observe the change that overtakes the young people: their gaze remains immobile, their faces are transfigured by an ecstatic happiness which is calm and moderate. Every once in a while their lips can be seen to move. ... After the apparition, Mass is celebrated in the crowded church. The young people assist at Mass..." (Ibid., pages 30, 31).

THE FALSE MESSAGES OF THE VISIONS

The young people converse with the personage of the vision and receive messages for their own personal lives, for the world at large, for the Catholic church, even personal messages directed to the pope. Following are some the messages which they have received. Note that by comparing these with the teaching of the Bible, it becomes clear that this personage is leading people away from truth and into error. Obviously they are dealing with a demonic power that is appearing as an angel of light.

1. THE WORLD CAN BE SAVED BY RELIGIOUS DUTIES: "The apparition of the Virgin is itself a message. However, at the same time she conveys explicit statements: the world has an urgent need of faith, of prayer, of repentance, and of asceticism. It can be saved" (Ibid., p. 32).

Contrast Matthew 24-25.

2. GOOD WORKS A DOOR TO HEAVEN: "Ivanka asked the Virgin about her mother, who had died two months earlier... In answer to this question, Our Lady responded that Ivanka should not worry. Her mother was happy near her. This was good news because Ivanka's mother did not have the reputation of being a 'saint'; she was an ordinary mother of a family. Thus, as we understand it, Mary bore witness that the humble accomplishing of our human and Christian duties is a door to heaven" (Ibid., pages 26, 27).

Contrast Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:1-8; Titus 3:5-7.

3. MARY IS TO BE CALLED "THE BLESSED VIRGIN": "The children asked the apparition: 'Who are you?' She answered without ambiguity: 'I am the Blessed Virgin Mary'" (Ibid., p. 27).

Contrast Matthew 13:55-56, which teaches that Mary had other children after Jesus was born and therefore is no longer a virgin.

4. MARY APPEARS AS GREATER THAN JESUS: "It was really Our Lady. She held Jesus in her arms. I saw the crown on her head... and her hand passed over the head of the child, like this" (Ibid., p. 44).

Notice that Jesus appears as weaker and smaller than Mary, even though it is He who is the risen Lord of Glory, seated at the right hand of the Father with all power in heaven and in earth in His control; and the Bible never mentions anything about Mary sharing Christ's glory. In fact, as Jesus was on the cross, He gave his mother away to John, since we "no longer know him after the flesh" (John 19:26,27; 2 Cor. 5:16).

5. THE POPE IS ENCOURAGED TO BE THE RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE WHOLE WORLD: "Did Our Lady have a message for the Pope?... 'That he should consider himself as the father of all people and not only the Christians. That he tirelessly and courageously promote the message of peace and love for all men.'... 'He should extend the faith to all people because we are more or less equal and that he persevere on his path'" (Ibid., p. 55).

Notice how the visions affirm the Catholic heresy that the pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth and that he is to be the spiritual ruler of the world, not only the leader of Catholics but of all Christians and even of all men. He is encouraged to continue in his present deceptive role of appearing as a great man of peace and love to the nations. He is encouraged to continue such things as his prayer for world peace in Assisi when he brought together leaders of all the world's major false religions and had them pray for world peace. We are reminded here of the warning in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

6. PEOPLE ARE ENCOURAGED TO BECOME NUNS AND PRIESTS: "Did our Lady tell you what you should do in life? 'She proposed to us to enter religious life [become nuns and priests].' 'Her desire is that we all enter religious life.' 'Once she said to us: 'I would wish that you would become nuns and priests...'" (Ibid., p. 58).

The Catholic priesthood and nunnery are wicked institutions which have caused many to commit great immoralities. The priest and nuns are forbidden to marry; they are considered more spiritual than the ordinary Christian; the Catholic priest is blasphemously ordained after the same order as Christ, the order of Melchizedek, and is said to have the power to forgive sins and to turn the bread and wine of the communion into the actual body and blood of Christ. Only a demon appearing as an angel of light would advise young people to become involved in such apostate things. It is sad to note that five of the six young people have decided to enter convents and monasteries.

7. THE VISIONS CAUSE PEOPLE TO BE BETTER CATHOLICS AND TO LOVE THE FALSE THINGS OF CATHOLICISM MORE: "Have the apparitions changed anything for you? 'Yes. Now I go regularly to Mass... I have more pleasure in praying and in going to Communion [mass].' 'Before, at Mass I used to wait for the end... Now I love to go to church [the Catholic mass].' '... I rather like to pray, to go to confession and to Communion [referring to Catholic confession to a priest and the mass].' 'Now I attend Mass with more attention, and I understand better. I love to go to church, to pray, to go to confession more than before.'

"Each day after the apparition, Mass was celebrated, and the young people came along quite simply. There was a large crowd at these Masses, and prayer was intense. The exceptional

supernatural event thus led people to the sacraments. The Virgin was bringing people to the Eucharist, and... the confessions.

"On August 6, 1982, the Blessed Virgin recommended monthly confession...

"June 28 [1983, the apparition said,] Pray at least half an hour morning and evening. Consecrate five minutes to the Sacred Heart" (Ibid., pp. 60, 61, 69, 80, 81).

Of course, Mary would not and does not appear to people today, but if she did she would certainly tell them to obey the Word of God and separate from all false things such as the Catholic confession and mass. If people are truly receiving spiritual blessings from God they will always turn to the truth and away from error. They will have the spirit of the Psalmist: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:128). The result of these visions prove that they are not of God, but are of the deluding spirits who created the false Catholic church and the "doctrines of devils" with which it is filled (1 Timothy 4:1-4).

8. THE APPARITION DESCRIBES HERSELF AS THE QUEEN OF PEACE. "I am the Queen of Peace.' This is how the apparition described herself to the young people" (Ibid., p. 62).

Mary is never called the Queen of Peace in the Bible. The term "Queen of Heaven" does appear in Scripture, but it refers to a heathen goddess! (See Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-25.)

9. THE PEOPLE ARE TAUGHT TO PRAY TO MARY AND TO PRAY REPETITIOUSLY: "On June 28 or 29, they asked her: 'How shall we pray?' The Virgin answered: 'Continue to recite seven times the Our Father, Hail Mary [a prayer to Mary], Glory Be to the Father, and the Creed.' On December 8, 1981... they saw her on her knees imploring Christ. She said in substance: 'My beloved Son, I beg you, pardon the world for the heavy sins by which it offends you.' August 2, 1983: 'Consecrate yourself to the Immaculate Heart. Abandon yourselves totally. I will protect you. I will pray to the Holy Spirit'" (Ibid., pp. 79, 80, 82).

The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 6:7, warned about repetitious prayers, saying, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." And the Bible from beginning to end forbids men from praying to anyone except God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary cannot mediate for men; she cannot intercede with Jesus for people! Christ alone is the Mediator and Intercessor, and the Catholic idea of praying to Mary and "the Saints" is pure blasphemy and is an abomination in the sight of God. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

CHARISMATIC LEADERS WHO APPROVE OF MEDJUGORJE

On pages 135 and 136 of aforementioned book is a partial listing of charismatic leaders who believe that Mary is appearing at Medjugorje and that the messages we have quoted are from God. One of these is the late "Mr. Pentecost," David DuPlessis. Three of the men in this list were leaders and speakers in the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization in New Orleans: Michael Scanlan, Thomas Forrest, and John Bertolucci. (Though Bertolucci did not

actually appear at the conference, the advertisements prior to the meeting said that he would be the speaker for the final night of the congress.) Thus charismatics, both Catholic and non-Catholic, accept the unscriptural happenings at Medjugorje as divine. This in itself shows that the charismatic movement is not led by the Holy Spirit of truth. It also reminds us of the great danger of accepting visions, voices, tongues, prophecies, dreams and other extra-biblical revelations as from God rather than being entirely satisfied with the Perfect and Complete Word of God, the Bible.

We are not saying that all charismatics believe the Catholic doctrines about Mary. But when one of the most influential Pentecostal leaders who has ever lived, David Duplessis, accepted the deceptions at Medjugorje, and when a massive charismatic conference is held and the 50,000 charismatics in attendance, together with the roughly 150 charismatic speakers, allow books such as this to be openly promoted, it becomes clear that the charismatic movement has loosed itself from all moorings to truth and reason and is well on its way to Rome.

[Distributed by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service, a listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. Our goal in this particular aspect of our ministry is not devotional but is TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. TO SUBSCRIBE to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service, send a blank email to fbis-subscribe@wayoflife.org. TO UNSUBSCRIBE, send a blank email to fbis-unsubscribe@wayoflife.org. TO CHANGE ADDRESSES, simply unsubscribe the old one, then re-subscribe the new one. Or a more simple process is to go to the web site and sign up or change addresses there: <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbis/subscribe.html>. We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6). Some of these articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 21st year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/catalog/catalog.htm> Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org (e-mail). We do not solicit funds from those who do not agree with our preaching and who are not helped by these publications, but for those who are, OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/offering.html> PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dccloud%40wayoflife.org>]